

CITY OF TUCSON
DEVELOPMENT STANDARD NO. 9-10.0
RIO NUEVO AND DOWNTOWN (RND) ZONE

RIO NUEVO AND DOWNTOWN (RND) ZONE

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9-10.1.0 GENERAL.

- 1.1 Introduction. In November 1999, voters approved the Rio Nuevo Multipurpose Facilities District to promote the development of Rio Nuevo and the revitalization of Downtown Tucson. Established with the cooperation of the Cities of Tucson and South Tucson, the District encompasses five key areas – Rio Nuevo, Downtown Tucson, the Broadway Corridor, El Con Mall, and Park Place Mall. This Development Standard addresses development only in the Rio Nuevo and Downtown Zone.

Design guidelines were developed through the Rio Nuevo master planning process involving substantial community input, active citizen committees, and several design workshops. Prior to that, design guidelines were prepared as part of the *Downtown Pedestrian Implementation Plan (DPIP)*. This plan was prepared with input from and review by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprised of Downtown property and business owners, residents, and governmental agency representatives. The *DPIP* was endorsed by the Mayor and Council in October of 1996. The guidelines were revised, and portions were referenced as design criteria in the City of Tucson Design Guidelines Manual.

The shared goal of these efforts is to shift Downtown Tucson's focus to creating a pedestrian-friendly environment to attract businesses and become a destination for residents and visitors. The revitalization of Downtown and redevelopment of Rio Nuevo will enhance the pedestrian environment and celebrate the multicultural history of the city and its unique desert environment.

- 1.2 Purpose. This Standard has been established for the purpose of implementing the Design Criteria established in Sec. 2.8.10.5, *Land Use Code (LUC)*, and informing property owners and permit applicants of review requirements and design criteria for projects within the Rio Nuevo and Downtown (RND) Zone. The RND Zone is an overlay district as defined in Sec. 6.2.18, *LUC*, and as shown for reference in **Figure 1, Rio Nuevo and Downtown Zone Map.**

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1.2 Purpose. (Cont'd)

The review procedures and design criteria summarized in this Development Standard are intended to promote quality design and innovative projects in the Rio Nuevo District and Downtown that will increase private and public property investments and property values.

A secondary intent of the Development Standard is to expedite the permitting process in the overlay zone by providing the applicant with clear direction. Illustrations are included to clarify particular design criteria and further aid the applicant in meeting review requirements.

- 1.3 Objectives. The Standard promotes the following objectives: 1) incorporate building and design elements that recognize Tucson's cultural history and environmental setting; 2) create high-intensity, mixed-use development within a walkable area; 3) provide parking areas that minimize the need for internal vehicular circulation; 4) preserve street frontages for pedestrians by placing parking at the rear or sides of buildings; 5) enhance the pedestrian environment to include shade trees, plazas, fountains, lighting, façade improvements, and storefronts to encourage window shopping; 6) develop graphic themes, enhanced streetscapes, and public art to make the project a distinct and unique destination; and 7) design projects to encourage neighborhood interaction and pedestrian access in commercial areas.

9-10.2.0 APPLICABILITY.

- 2.1 Applicability. This Standard applies to all development and improvements within the RND Zone. The Standard lists design criteria that may be applicable throughout the zone or within particular subareas as noted below.

This Standard is intended for use by public agencies, private property owners, landscape architects, architects, engineers, artists, designers, and developers who are preparing to alter property within the zone.

This Standard does not waive any applicable City regulations or codes. Plans approved with respect to this Standard must also meet applicable *LUC* and building code requirements.

- 2.2 Design Context and Compatibility Report. As part of the submittal requirements for development review within the RND Zone, the applicant must submit a Design Context and Compatibility Report. This report should be a succinct introduction to the project, limited to two to three pages, that demonstrates the applicant's understanding of the regional, community, and site-specific design contexts. The report format may be a combination of text and graphics. If the project design departs from the established context or does not comply with mandatory design criteria in this Standard, the report must explain the reason for an alternate design solution.
- 2.3 Definitions. Definitions used in this Standard are found in the Development Standards Glossary or in Sec. 6.2.0 of the *LUC*. Selected terms relating to design elements and criteria are further defined and clarified graphically within this Development Standard.

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9-10.3.0 DESIGN PRINCIPLES.

- 3.1 Diversity. Diversity reflects the prehistoric, historic, and cultural elements that make up Tucson's urban form and context. This principle forms the basis for the specific design criteria including building character and materials that reflect the indigenous influence of the Sonoran Desert region and culture. The intent of this design principle is not to prescribe architectural style, materials, or form but to encourage innovation in contemporary design.
- 3.2 Design in Context. Design in Context is the recognition that Tucson is a unique desert Southwestern city. New buildings should also translate into contemporary form the basic principles that contribute to historic structures and other structures in and around the Site Context - Development Zone, as well as addressing the Regional and Community Context. Water features located in plazas and open space areas throughout the RND Zone will offer water as a symbol of the Downtown area.
- A. *Regional Context*. The regional context of a place is reflected in its environment and natural landscape, its heritage and cultural resources, and its native building forms and materials. The regional context for Rio Nuevo and Downtown Tucson includes the ecology of the Sonoran Desert, the Santa Cruz River, and views to Sentinel Peak and surrounding mountain ranges. Context is also found in climate – hot and dry desert summers, intermittent rainy seasons, cold winter nights, clear skies, the sun, strong shadows, and limited water availability. Regional context includes the traditional barrios and neighborhoods, walking paths, a multihued palette of colors used for decorating, and the Spanish street names that evolved over the course of many years of Tucson's development.
- B. *Community Context*. Community context within the RND Zone is a further illustration of the regional environmental and cultural setting, as reflected in particular subareas. Development should respond to the prevailing design character within each subarea.
- C. *Site Context – Development Zone*. Site context looks at the immediate surroundings of the proposed improvement. The Development Zone is defined in Sec. 6.2.4, *LUC*. New buildings should strengthen and enhance the characteristics of the immediate setting and build upon or maintain key unifying patterns. However, they should not directly mimic historic buildings so as to be indistinguishable from them. Rather, new buildings should translate into contemporary form the basic principles that contributed to historic structures.
- In areas where historic context is a criterion, design must respond to this context through the use of appropriately scaled buildings utilizing materials, exterior openings, and a relationship to the street consistent with existing historic structures. (See Development Standard 9-08.0, Historic Preservation Zone Development Standards, for information relating to development patterns, design relationships, and architectural styles and detail.)
- 3.3 Accessibility. Accessibility includes three dimensions. The first is physical mobility for pedestrians, including physically disabled pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and private cars

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provided by an efficient and pleasant circulation system. The second is visual, retaining physical amenities such as viewsheds, open space, and visual connections to the mountains and the Santa Cruz River. The third is informational and educational, including access to information and ideas. Rio Nuevo builds on the idea that Tucson offers cultural and historic resources that must be available to residents and visitors alike. It is the sharing of ideas of history, prehistory, environment, landscape, building form, pathway, and plaza that can enrich the experience for those who come to Rio Nuevo and Downtown. This can be done by restoration of key elements of historic buildings, interpretation of prehistoric cultural resources, and installation of educational signs and plaques throughout the area.

9-10.4.0 DESIGN CRITERIA.

- 4.1 Overall Site Design. The design of all projects in the RND Zone shall be responsive to the physical context of the region, community, and site. Site design shall be based on maximizing relationships with existing and/or planned structures, circulation systems, and natural features. Site design shall also take into consideration significant visual relationships and landmarks.
- 4.2 Building and Structures. The intent is to ensure that site design and architectural character reinforce the image of the RND Zone as an inviting, lively, and pedestrian-friendly district. Design should promote safe and easy passage from the public realm into individual buildings. Twenty-four-hour, street-level activity should be encouraged by providing a mixture of retail, office, and residential uses within each building. A critical mass of evenly distributed residential uses will encourage evening street activity. Certain areas or streets could be exclusively retail and residential, but buildings dedicated exclusively to office space should be discouraged. Building façades, colors, and materials should be appropriate for the urban streetscape.
 - A. *Pedestrian Experience of Buildings.* The pedestrian experience, including scale, mass, color, materials, and historic context, should be combined to reinforce the uniqueness of Sonoran elements and Tucson's culture.
 1. All new construction shall provide scale-defining architectural elements or details at the first two floor levels, such as windows, spandrels, awnings, porticos, cornices, pilasters, columns, and balconies.
 2. Every commercial building frontage shall provide windows, window displays, or visible activity within and adjacent to the building at the ground floor level, with a minimum of fifty (50) percent of the building frontage providing such features.
 3. Façade walls shall provide visual interest. At the street level, a single plane of a façade may not be longer than fifty (50) feet without architectural relief or articulation by features such as windows, trellises, and arcades.
 4. Façade design must provide a safe and appealing nighttime environment by providing exterior building and window lighting that is pedestrian-scaled, down-shielded, and controlled for glare.

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- B. *Massing.* The proposed buildings should respect the scale of those buildings located on adjacent properties and serve as an orderly transition to a different scale. Building heights with a vastly different scale than those on adjacent properties should have a transition in scale to reduce and mitigate potential impacts. In areas undergoing change, long-range plans should be consulted for guidance as to appropriate heights.
- C. *Entryways and Façades.*
1. Primary public entries shall be directly accessed from the sidewalk along a street rather than from a parking lot. Public access to commercial and governmental buildings shall be provided at sidewalk grade. The primary floor of, and access to, residential structures may be elevated. Secondary access may be provided from off-street parking areas.
 2. The front doors of all commercial and governmental buildings shall be visible from the street if located more than ten (10) feet from the front building line, and their locations must be reinforced with additional graphics, lighting, marquees, or canopies.
 3. Façades of historic buildings may be enhanced with signs, awnings, or street trees. If façade improvements are proposed, they must complement the overall historic context of the Downtown and respect the architectural integrity of the façade.
- D. *Colors.* Colors may conform to the overall color palette and context of the Downtown area or subarea or may be used expressly to create visual interest, variety, and street rhythms. The rationale for an expressive or idiosyncratic use of color should be described in the development plan submittal.
- E. *Materials.*
1. Buildings shall be designed to shield adjacent buildings and public rights-of-way from reflected heat and glare.
 2. New buildings should use materials, patterns, and elements that relate to the traditional context of the Downtown area or subarea.
- F. *Setbacks.* All new construction shall maintain the prevailing setback existing within its development zone.

4.3 Circulation and Parking.

- A. *Street Hierarchy.* The Downtown is organized along the hierarchy of Downtown's streets, with the pedestrian given top priority for the Downtown. (See **Figure 2, Downtown Street Hierarchy.**) The streets, including their rights-of-way, are addressed in one of three classifications.
1. *Pedestrian Retail Core Streets.* These are the streets that host Downtown's greatest variety of commercial and public activities at the street

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level. They also accommodate vehicular traffic including automobiles, public transit, and service vehicles and have on-street parking in some locations. However, priority is given to the pedestrian.

2. *Entry Streets.* These streets carry high volumes of traffic (respectively) into and out of Downtown. These streets typically are wider to accommodate through and turning traffic.
3. *Traffic Calming Streets.* These streets are generally narrower, with fewer travel lanes than entry streets, and accommodate on-street parking. Traffic Calming Streets are all those not designated as Entry Streets or Pedestrian Retail Core Streets.

B. *Pedestrian Pathways.*

1. Shade shall be provided for at least fifty (50) percent of all sidewalks and pedestrian pathways as measured at 2:00 p.m. on June 21 when the sun is 82° above the horizon (based on 32°N Latitude). Shade may be provided by arcades, canopies, or shade structures, provided they respect the historic and design context of the street and the architectural integrity of the building. Deciduous trees, as proposed in the *Downtown Comprehensive Street Tree Plan*, are encouraged to supplement existing evergreen trees. The use of plantings and shade structures in the City right-of-way is permitted to meet this standard. The shade provided by a building may serve to meet this guideline.
2. Along pedestrian pathways that lead to the Rio Nuevo South Cultural Plaza and in areas planned for retail and entertainment uses and high pedestrian traffic, shade devices should be provided at pedestrian waiting areas and street intersections.

C. *Vehicular Circulation and Parking.*

1. *Circulation.*
 - a. All parking area access lanes (PAALs) adjacent to buildings shall have pedestrian circulation paths between the PAAL and the building, with a minimum width of six (6) feet.
 - b. All vehicular ingress and egress points shall be perpendicular to the intersecting street. Ingress and egress points shall be designed to minimize vehicular/pedestrian and vehicular/bicycle conflicts. Adequate storage for vehicular queuing at parking facilities must be contained on site. Right turn bays will be strongly discouraged within this zone. Points of ingress and egress shall be minimized wherever possible. Additional temporary ingress and egress locations may be permitted for parking structures that anticipate occasional high peak period traffic flows (i.e., parking facilities for event venues).

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2. *Parking.*

- a. *General.* Parking requirements within the RND Zone are listed in the *LUC*, Sec. 3.3.6.
 - 1) All public parking must be open and accessible to the public between the hours of 5:00 a.m. and 1:00 a.m., seven (7) days per week, with the exception of the performance of required maintenance.
- b. *Provisions.*
 - 1) All new parking shall be designed so that vehicles are not visible from the adjoining street level, through incorporation of pedestrian arcades, occupied space, or display space.
 - 2) Employee parking for all uses should be provided at remote locations in order to maximize the availability of space for development.

D. *Pavement of Sidewalks, Crosswalks, and Streets.* Treatment of sidewalks, crosswalks, and streets should be consistent with the design guidelines of the *DPIP*.

4.4 Pedestrian Plazas and Open Space. The fundamental objective of this Section is to encourage public and private investments to enhance the character and function of Downtown's pedestrian environment. The enhancement of the Downtown pedestrian environment will contribute to the experience visitors have in the Downtown area.

A. *Plazas and Pedestrian Nodes.* Plazas, courtyards, and patios are landscaped outdoor areas designed to accommodate multiple uses, from large gatherings of people for performing arts to smaller gatherings. The plazas and courtyards will be one of the ways that spaces and uses can be linked. There should be five (5) percent of the gross floor area of the new construction provided in public plazas or courtyards for every new development.

B. *Viewshed Corridors.* Views of all historic properties and all natural elements surrounding the Downtown should be considered during design.

Plazas, courtyards, and open spaces should be sited to include views to other public spaces. Protection of the views, especially from the pedestrian perspective, will be important for each new development.

C. *Linkages (Physical and Visual).* Neighborhood linkages will be maintained throughout Downtown. Pedestrian trails, such as the Old Pueblo Promenade (defined in the *DPIP*), will also be maintained and enhanced as part of new development.

4.5 Streetscape.

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- A. *Public Art.* Public art is encouraged in all new development. The character of the public art will fit within the context defined by the development and other surrounding buildings.
- B. *Seating and Furnishings.*
1. Seating will be provided at all outdoor gathering spaces. The character, color, and materials of the seating will fit within the context of the development and other surrounding buildings.
 2. Waste receptacles will be provided and will fit within the context of the development.
 3. Newspaper receptacles and vending machines in exterior spaces shall be consistent with the design of the project.
- C. *Lighting and Utilities.* Lighting is essential for providing a safe and comfortable nighttime environment in Rio Nuevo and the Downtown. Standards for lighting will necessarily vary, depending on the design context of the specific subarea, the level of pedestrian and vehicular activity, and the overall design concept of the project. Likewise, the effect of utility fixtures or appurtenances should be considered in the development proposal.
1. Adequate lighting shall be provided for safety and visibility at night. Project plans must include illumination levels and color rendition of exterior building lighting adjacent to sidewalks and alleys.
 2. Historic light standards should be maintained and upgraded as necessary to provide minimum light levels for safety. If historic light standards cannot meet specified criteria for roadway lighting, supplemental lighting standards should be chosen to complement the character and scale of existing historic light standards.
 3. Metal halide light sources should be used in pedestrian areas, streets, and parking areas for their white color of light that contributes to the comfort of users. Particular concern of lighting levels should be given to areas and points where potential conflict between pedestrians and vehicles occurs, such as crosswalks, parking areas, etc. In pedestrian areas, adequate lighting distribution should be provided that overlaps at a height of about seven (7) feet above the finish grade to allow visual recognition of pedestrians. Illumination levels and lighting sources should be used that minimize areas or points of glare while providing adequate levels of light for safety and security.
 4. Vehicular light luminaires should be full cut-off fixtures.
 5. To minimize sidewalk clutter, pedestrian and vehicular lights should utilize the same pole. The spacing of the combined fixtures shall be dictated by City illumination standards for roadways.

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6. Utility boxes should be located adjacent to buildings where feasible. Utility fixtures attached to buildings, patios, or other decorative walls and other mechanical equipment shall not obstruct pedestrian movement. These and other utility appurtenances should be integrated into the design and historic character of the Downtown outside of the public right-of-way.

4.6 Signage.

- A. *Downtown Destination Signage Program.* In a well-conceived system of providing information for pedestrians, the system should lead members of the public to parking in the vicinity of their final destination, then guide the visitors to their destination with more specific pedestrian-level signage.

Any new public parking provided in the Downtown area will include provisions for pedestrian signage to be compatible with vehicular and other signage in the Downtown. The parking facility will include signage for the facility and pedestrian kiosks located just outside the facility and will encourage visitors to see other destinations while they are Downtown.

- 4.7 Resource Conservation. The intent of the following energy and water conservation criteria is to identify specific actions that will reduce energy consumption, demonstrate the use of solar energy, and promote alternative design solutions in keeping with sustainable building practices.

- A. *Energy Conservation.* The facilities should use little energy to run; be constructed to last; have low maintenance needs; and respect the regional, cultural, and material uniqueness of Tucson.
- B. *Sustainable Energy Standard.* All public facilities shall meet the requirements of the Sustainable Energy Standard to the extent reasonable. The Standard may be waived by the City Manager based on factors including, but not limited to, excessive cost or unsuitability to the project.

9-10.5.0 RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENFORCEMENT. DSD has the authority to enforce applicable provisions of this Development Standard.

9-10.6.0 MODIFICATIONS. When an applicant requests a modification of this Standard, the Community Design Review Committee (CDRC) may consider the modification in accordance with Development Standard 1-01.0.

Appeals to decisions made by the CDRC are considered in accordance with Development Standard 1-01.0.

9-10.7.0 RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVIEW. The DSD Director reviews this Standard at least annually or at the discretion of the City Manager.

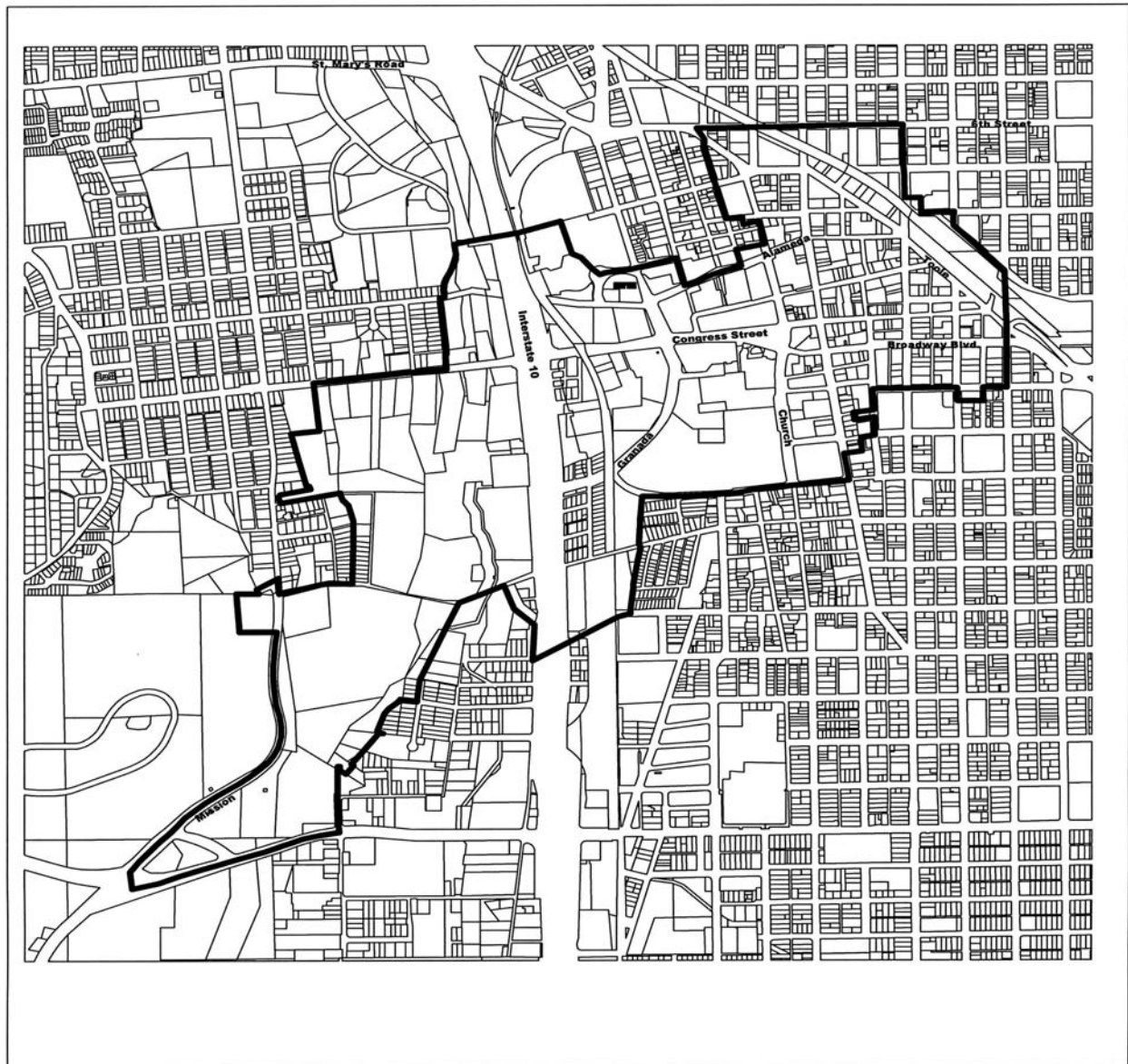
9-10.8.0 LIST OF FIGURES.

Figure 1 – Rio Nuevo and Downtown Zone Map

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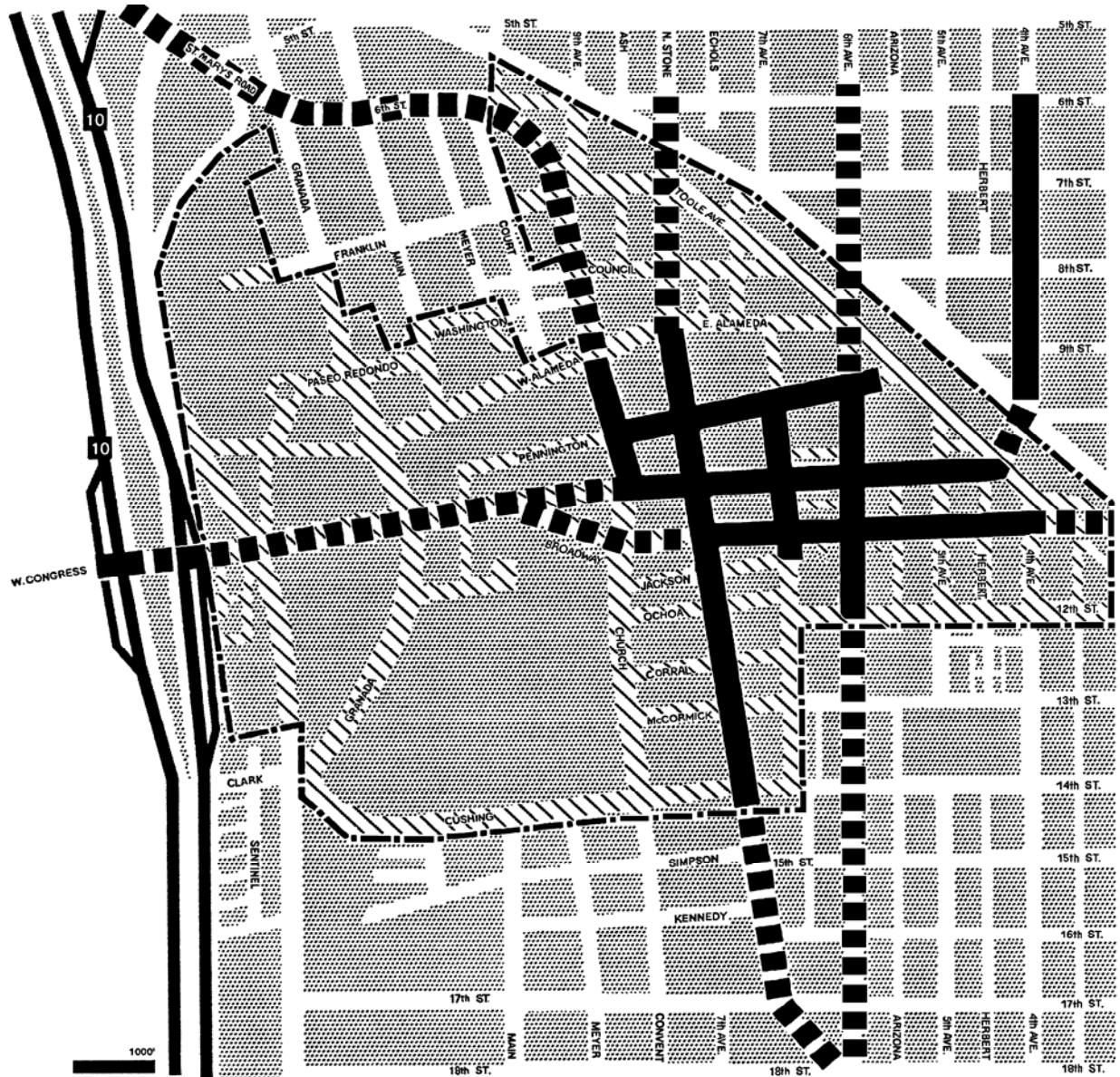
Figure 2 – Downtown Street Hierarchy

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Rio Nuevo
and
Downtown Zone





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CIRCULATION

STREET HIERARCHY

Legend:

-  Pedestrian Retail Core
-  Entry Streets
-  Calming Streets are all the remaining streets within the Downtown Heritage Incentive Zone
-  Downtown Heritage Incentive Zone

**DOWNTOWN
STREET
HIERARCHY**